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ONLINE UNIVERSITY
COURSE OF THE MONTH

The Power of Respectful Language

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www.imwca.org

The Informer

A monthly newsletter addressing workplace safety by Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association .

Identify risks, ensure "No 1 Gets Hurt"

In 1996, the National Safety Council (NSC) established June as National Safety Month, aiming to increase awareness of the leading safety and health risks and ultimately decrease the number of workplace injuries and deaths. Each week in June focuses on a specific safety topic.

Week 1



Severe weather, fires and other calamities can hit at any time with little or no warning. Whether you are at work or at home, it is important to identify the potential emergencies and develop a step-by-step plan to address how you and your family or employees will handle the exposures. For example, in the event of a fire, how will everyone in the home or building be accounted for? Where will you go and how will you operate if you cannot return to your home or office.

Week 2



Wellness can help prevent injuries in a number of ways. Many fall injuries result from individuals being inattentive due to fatigue. Back injuries can be caused by lack of flexibility. Strains and sprains can result from lack of endurance. People who generally have a good wellness level have fewer injuries. A good diet, good sleeping habits and regular exercise contribute to better overall health.

Week 3



Unfortunately, IMWCA is no stranger to slip and fall injuries. Falls account for a significant number of injuries to member employees, and about 25 percent of our cost of claims. More important, people are getting hurt. In almost every case, this is preventable. Start with proper footwear, and pay special attention to your work environment. This applies to everyone, from the office to the water plant. Ensure there is adequate lighting. Don't carry more than you can handle. Maintain three points of contact when using a ladder or getting in or out of vehicles and equipment.

Week 4



Eliminating distracted driving is a major step in preventing driving related injuries. Talking or texting remains a major contributor to highly-preventable vehicle accidents. In addition to putting down the phone, drivers should also restrict activities that take attention away from the street, such as tuning radios or eating. Seatbelt use also remains essential to preventing injury in the event of an accident. Do you wear your seatbelts every time you get in a vehicle?

The National Safety Council has free downloads for each week to help you promote these topics:
www.nsc.org/nsm.

Eat more colors

June is National Fruit and Vegetable Month, and the Internet is ripe with ideas (pun intended) on how to integrate more of these foods into your daily diet. We all know the benefits of fruits and vegetables: vitamins, minerals, fiber, low sodium, the list goes on. Whether you grow the food at home, buy it local or purchase it through a big box store, there are bountiful reasons that eating more vegetables and fruits, in all the colors, should be on your to-do list for June.

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends filling at least half your plate with a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits to get to the recommended five cups of vegetables and four cups of fruits each day. Frozen, canned, fresh and dried varieties all count toward the daily goal, though products packaged in heavy syrups or sodium should be avoided. Start by adding just one fruit or vegetable to the meals and snacks you already eat. If you're already eating plenty of these foods, try including more colors.

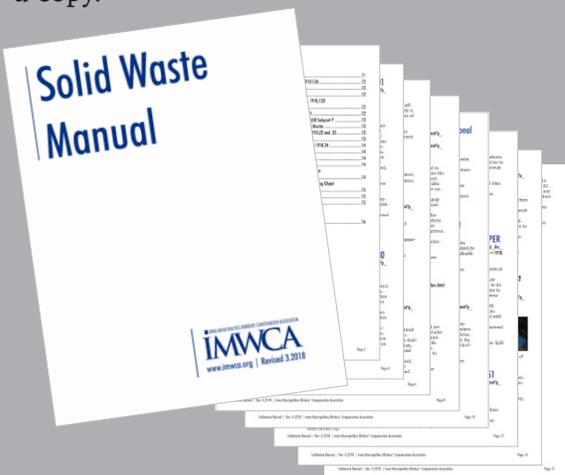
According to the AHA, "All fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that may help prevent heart disease, cancer and other illnesses...The best way to get all the various nutrients is to eat fruits and vegetables of many different colors."

So go ahead, try to eat all the colors!



Solid Waste Safety Manual updated

As part of IMWCA's ongoing review of resources, the IMWCA Solid Waste Safety Manual was recently updated. Changes include information on additional topics and a listing of relevant Online University courses. The updated manual is posted online now. Visit the Model Programs page of the Loss Control section at www.imwca.org to download a copy.



Payroll audits ensure correct premium

The 2017-2018 Fiscal Year is coming to an end, and that means payroll audits. Last year someone at your entity estimated the payroll on which the workers' compensation premium was based. The purpose of the audit is to verify actual payroll figures to ensure that the appropriate amount of premium is collected.

Audits will be performed in July and August by IMWCA's contracted firm, Information Providers, Inc. (IPI). Each member will receive a memorandum from IPI detailing the information needed to complete the audit, as well as an appointment letter to schedule the audit. Having this information readily available will help the auditor efficiently complete the audit with fewer callbacks to obtain missing information.

After your audit has been completed, requests for changes or corrections must be made within 30 days of the date your audit was processed by IMWCA. That date will appear on the Audited Premium Schedule that will arrive with your copy of the audit. Your local agent will also receive copies of these documents. When the review period has ended, each member will receive either an invoice for the balance due, or a refund check.

Questions about the audit process may be addressed to Andrew Justice or Jeff Hovey at (800) 257-2708.



Check out this video on YouTube to learn a little more.

When seasonal employees don't workout

Seasonal employees can play an important role at a public entity and are essential to maintaining productivity during peak seasons. From hiring to termination, it is vital you treat seasonal employees like the regular or full-time employees within your department. Seasonal employees are covered by the same employment laws as other full-time and part-time employees. This includes the Fair Labor Standards Act for minimum wage, overtime and child labor. For employers with 15 or more employees the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission oversees discrimination and equal pay.

Unfortunately, seasonal employee issues can trip up the most experienced manager. Often times managers prefer to take the path of least resistance, ignoring the issue and choosing to wait for the employee to terminate at the end of the season. All the while planning to never hire them back.

Following this unrealistic path often allows the situation to go from bad to worse. It allows the poor performers that remain to have a direct effect on other employees and the bottom dollar. Poor performers can contribute to increased absenteeism, decreased

productivity, high turnover, poor work environment, increased workers' compensation claims and the potential for litigation costs. It is very important to address an issue right away to protect all employees. If an employee is putting themselves or others in danger, either by not following safety protocols or through other means, the situation must be addressed immediately.

When dealing with seasonal employee issues you must follow your policies and procedures, especially your disciplinary policy, the same way you would with regular employees. Be cognizant of how your collective bargaining defines an "eligible" employee. Traditionally seasonal employees are not covered by collective bargaining units, per Code of Iowa Chapter 20.4(4) which "excludes a temporary public employees employed for a period of four months or less." If an employee works into the fifth consecutive month, there is a potential they may be covered by the collective bargain unit.

As with any other termination, it is always best to check with your attorney to ensure you are not violating any laws or rights of the employee.

OSHA reporting requirement reminder cards available

Due to popular demand, IMWCA has reprinted the reminder cards that inform members what types of injuries require immediate notification to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Please ask an IMWCA loss control representative for copies or email us at losscontrol@iowaleague.org.



IMWCA Informer is a monthly newsletter published by the Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) in cooperation with the Iowa League of Cities. View past issues online at www.imwca.org.

Comments or suggestions: contact Bethany Crile, newsletter editor, at (515) 244-7282 or bethanycrile@iowaleague.org.

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